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55

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INVINCIBLE



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ROBERT KIRKMAN
WRITER

RYAN OTTLEY
PENCILER, INKER

FCD PLASCENCIA
COLORIST

RUS WOOTON
LETTERER

AUBREY SITTERSON
EDITOR

COVER BY RYAN OTTLEY & FCD PLASCENCIA
CREATED BY ROBERT KIRKMAN & CORY WALKER



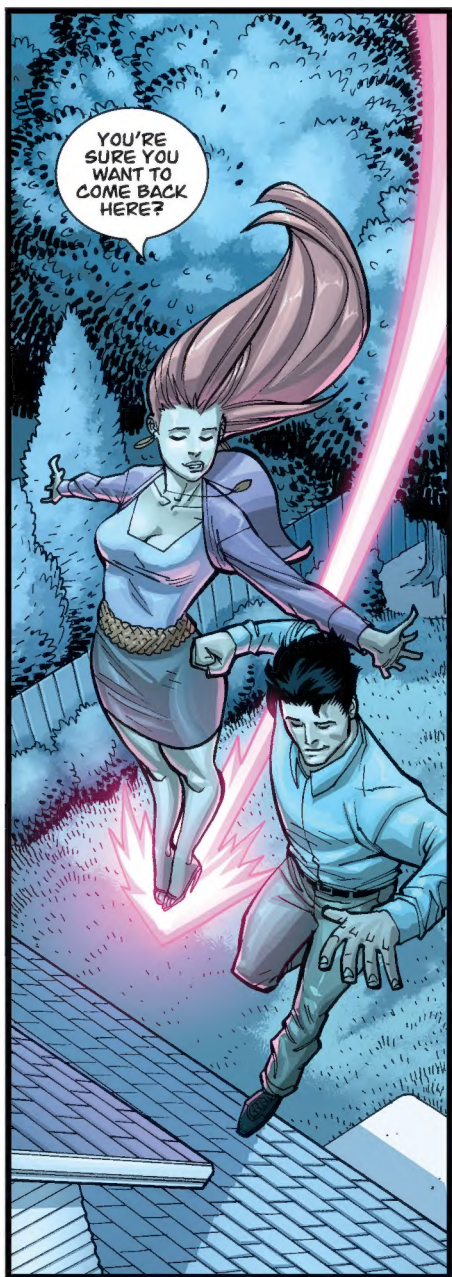
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Monica Howard - production artist
www.imagecomics.com

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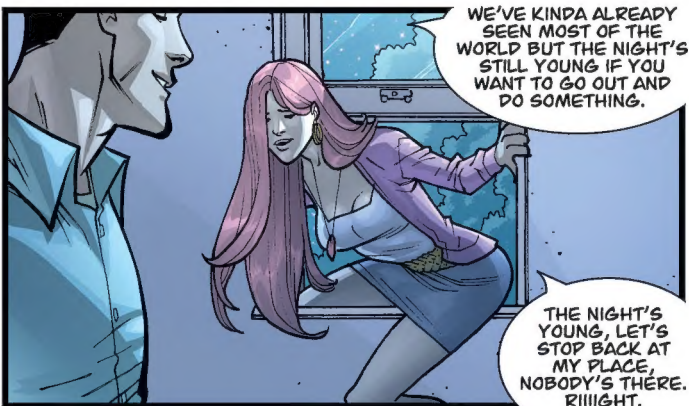
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YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO COME BACK HERE?

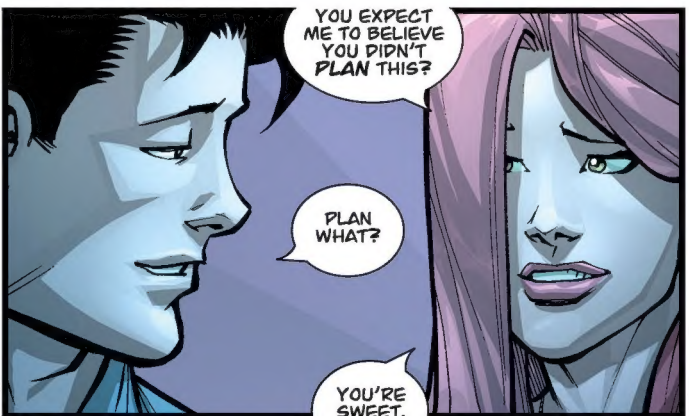
SURE, I FIGURED THIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO JUST SIT AND TALK. I THINK MY MOM'S OUT ON A DATE... OLIVER'S TUTOR TOOK HIM TO SEE SOME PLAY TONIGHT.

THERE'S NOBODY HERE.



WE'VE KINDA ALREADY SEEN MOST OF THE WORLD BUT THE NIGHT'S STILL YOUNG IF YOU WANT TO GO OUT AND DO SOMETHING.

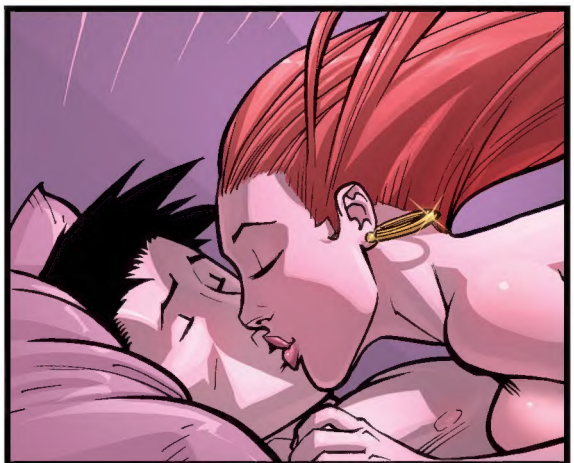
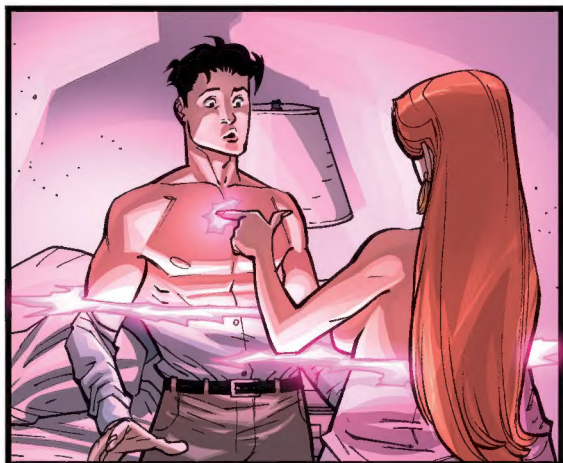
THE NIGHT'S YOUNG, LET'S STOP BACK AT MY PLACE, NOBODY'S THERE. RIIGHT.



YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T PLAN THIS?

PLAN WHAT?

YOU'RE SWEET.



BORN OF A DWINDLING NOMADIC RACE, ROBBED OF THEIR HOMEWORLD BY THE FEARSOME VILTRUMITES! EXPERIMENTED ON TO INCREASE HIS STRENGTH AND SPEED UNTIL HE EMERGED A GUARDIAN OF THE SPACEWAYS! IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS: ALLEN THE ALIEN IN:

LOCK DOWN, BUT NOT OUT!

AND SO, DEAR READER, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE TO GIVE YOUNG MARK GRAYSON AND SAMANTHA EVE WILKINS SOME *PRIVACY*.

THIS IS A FAMILY TITLE AFTER ALL.

YES, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO FAN FAVORITE, ALLEN THE ALIEN... WHO CURRENTLY RESIDES IN A VILTRUMITE PRISON CELL... FOR NOW.

YOU SEE, THESE SHACKLES CANNOT HOLD HIM. THESE WALLS CANNOT HOLD HIM. THIS PRISON CANNOT HOLD HIM, FOR ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS GROWN STRONG, VERY STRONG.*

BUT STILL, HE REMAINS, STILL HE WAITS...

...BECAUSE ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS A PLAN.

*SEE ISSUE 38 FOR DETAILS, INVINCIBLEHEADS.

ROBERT KIRKMAN
WRITER

RYAN OTTLEY
ARTIST

FCO PLASCENCIA
COLORIST

RUS WOOTON
LETTERER

CORY WALKER
INSPIRATION

ERIC STEPHENSON
PUBLISHER

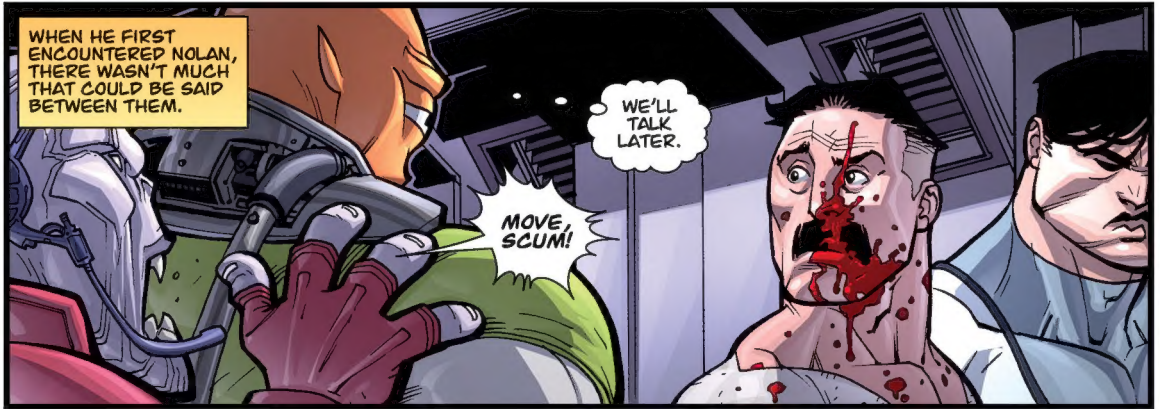
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ALLEN IS HERE FOR A REASON AND THAT REASON IS NOLAN GRAYSON, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS OMNI-MAN, THE FATHER OF INVINCIBLE.

HE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE TAKEN PRISONER WHEN HE LEARNED NOLAN WAS BEING HELD HERE.*

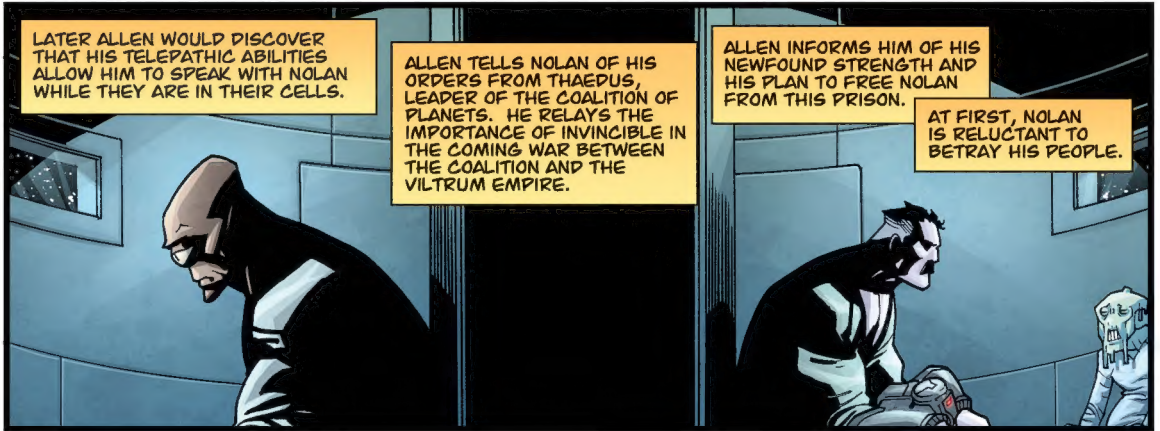
*SEE ISSUE 45.



WHEN HE FIRST ENCOUNTERED NOLAN, THERE WASN'T MUCH THAT COULD BE SAID BETWEEN THEM.

WE'LL TALK LATER.

MOVE, SCUM!



LATER ALLEN WOULD DISCOVER THAT HIS TELEPATHIC ABILITIES ALLOW HIM TO SPEAK WITH NOLAN WHILE THEY ARE IN THEIR CELLS.

ALLEN TELLS NOLAN OF HIS ORDERS FROM THAEPUS, LEADER OF THE COALITION OF PLANETS. HE RELAYS THE IMPORTANCE OF INVINCIBLE IN THE COMING WAR BETWEEN THE COALITION AND THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

ALLEN INFORMS HIM OF HIS NEWFOUND STRENGTH AND HIS PLAN TO FREE NOLAN FROM THIS PRISON.

AT FIRST, NOLAN IS RELUCTANT TO BETRAY HIS PEOPLE.



ALLEN CONTINUES TO TELL NOLAN ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT NOLAN'S BOOKS, INVINCIBLE AND HIS NEW YOUNGER BROTHER, AND EVENTUALLY, HE BEGINS TO TELL HIM OF OTHER THINGS.

HER NAME IS TELIA AND SHE IS VERY SPECIAL TO ME. I LOVE HER. I DO. BUT MY PEOPLE WON'T ALLOW ME TO BE WITH HER.

MY PEOPLE, THE UNOPANS, WERE NEARLY EXTINCT--WE HAVE STRICT MATING RULES TO ENSURE OUR SURVIVAL. WE HAVE TO LIVE IN SECRET...



EVENTUALLY, THIS LED TO NOLAN TALKING ABOUT OTHER THINGS AS WELL.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL-- NOT EXACTLY, BUT I HAVE FEELINGS THAT GO AGAINST EVERYTHING I'VE EVER BELIEVED TO BE TRUE.

MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE HAS BEEN PUT INTO QUESTION. I FEEL A LOVE I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE, MADE STRONGER BY ABSENCE, AND IT'S SOMETHING, AS A VILTRUMITE, I SHOULD NOT BE FEELING.



MANY THINGS WERE DISCUSSED IN THE TIME NOLAN AWAITED EXECUTION FOR HIS CRIMES AGAINST THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

EVENTUALLY THEY EVEN DISCUSSED THEIR MANY ENCOUNTERS IN EARTH'S ORBIT, YEARS AGO AT THIS POINT, WHEN NEITHER ONE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE OTHER.*

A BOND STARTED TO FORM.

*SEEN BRIEFLY IN ISSUE 2 AND AGAIN IN ISSUE 11.



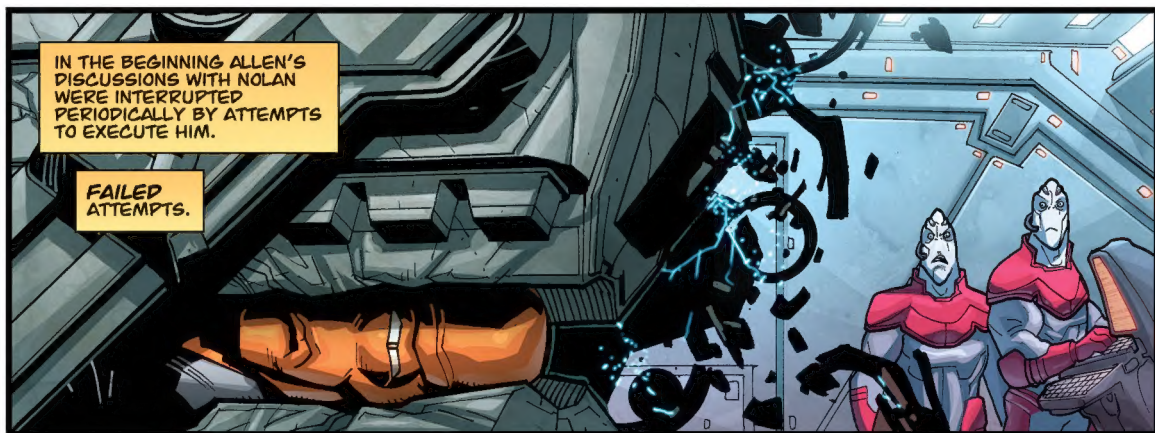
UNTIL THEY WERE FRIENDS.



THAT BOND GREW, UNTIL THE MISSION BECAME THAT MUCH MORE IMPORTANT.

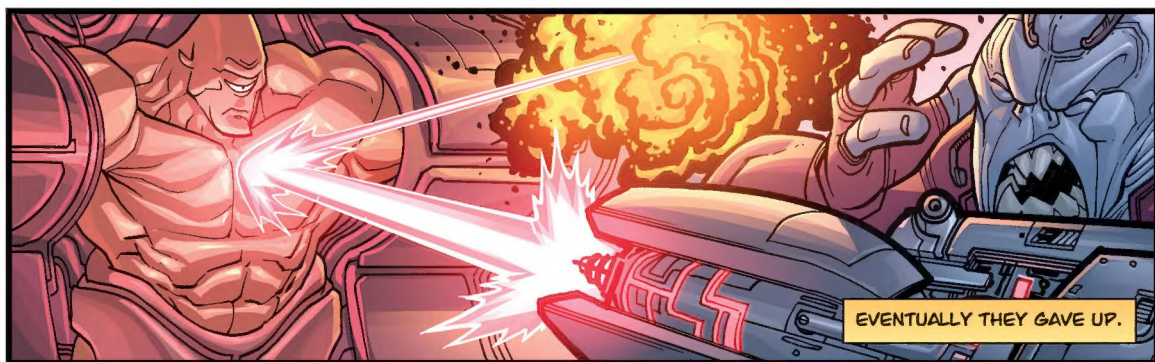
ALLEN WAS NO LONGER THERE TO RESCUE A POSSIBLE ALLY.

HE NEEDED TO SAVE HIS FRIEND AND HE WAS NOT SURE HE WOULD SUCCEED--AND THIS WORRIED HIM.



IN THE BEGINNING ALLEN'S DISCUSSIONS WITH NOLAN WERE INTERRUPTED PERIODICALLY BY ATTEMPTS TO EXECUTE HIM.

FAILED ATTEMPTS.



EVENTUALLY THEY GAVE UP.



THEY STOPPED TRYING TO EXECUTE HIM. FROM THAT POINT ON, ALLEN WAITED--LIKE NOLAN, HE WAITED FOR THE TIME WHEN THE VILTRUMITES THEMSELVES WOULD FINALLY COME TO EXECUTE HIM.

HE WAITED.

AND WAITED.

AND WAITED.



ALLEN WOULD OFTEN WONDER TO HIMSELF WHY IT WAS TAKING SO LONG. WHAT IS IT THEY WERE WAITING ON?

WHY WERE THEY WAITING?



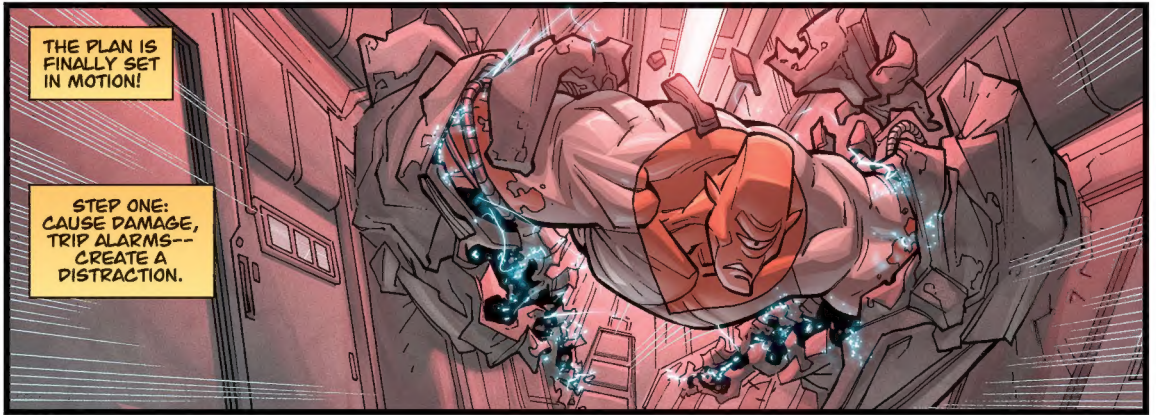
WHY?

IT'S TIME.



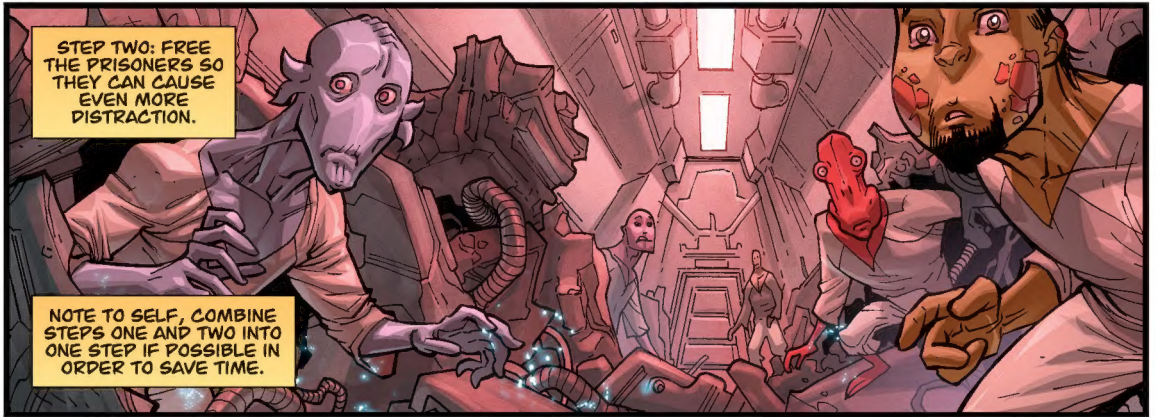


IT WAS THEN THAT THE ABSURDITY OF ALLEN ACTUALLY BEING CONTAINED IN THIS PRISON BECAME ALL TOO CLEAR.



THE PLAN IS FINALLY SET IN MOTION!

STEP ONE: CAUSE DAMAGE, TRIP ALARMS-- CREATE A DISTRACTION.



STEP TWO: FREE THE PRISONERS SO THEY CAN CAUSE EVEN MORE DISTRACTION.

NOTE TO SELF, COMBINE STEPS ONE AND TWO INTO ONE STEP IF POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME.



STEP THREE: SCAN THE PRISONERS AS THEY ESCAPE, SEE IF ANY OF THEM ARE FORMIDABLE ENOUGH TO AID US IN OUR ESCAPE EFFORTS.

STEP ONE: CHECK.

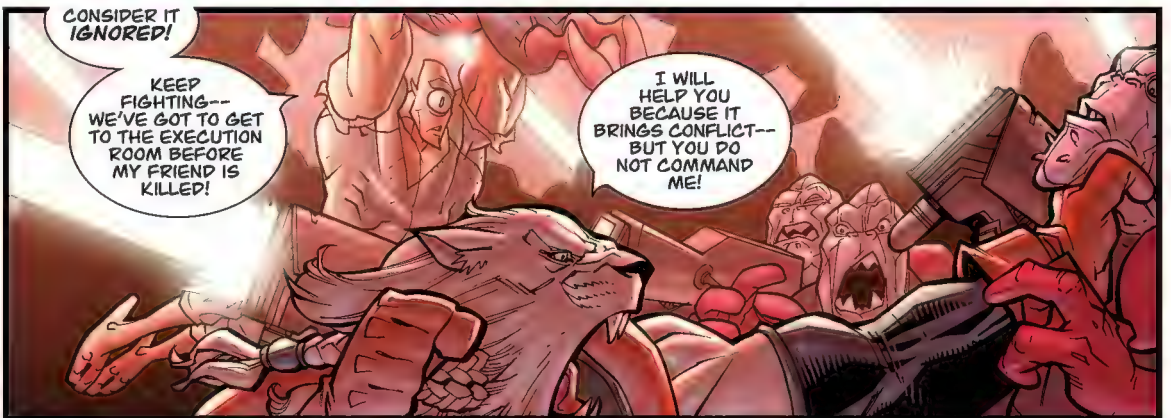
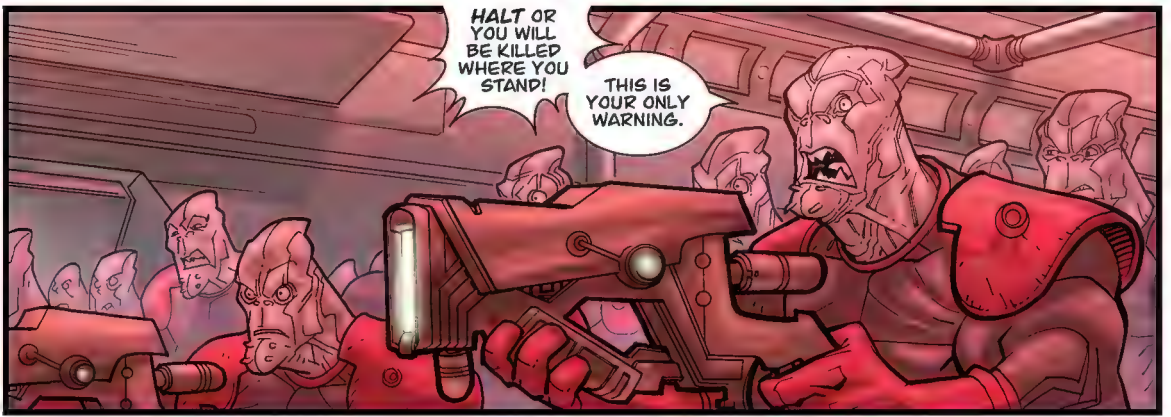
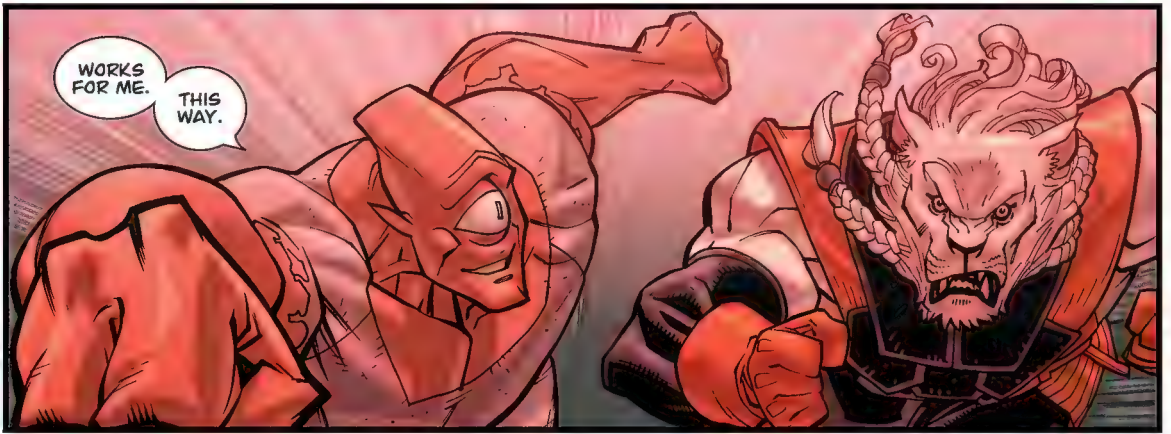
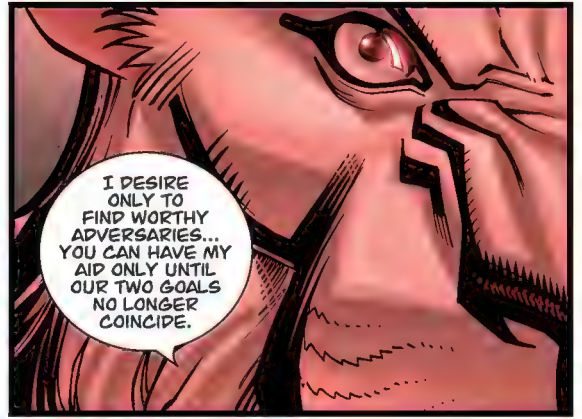
STEP TWO: CHECK.

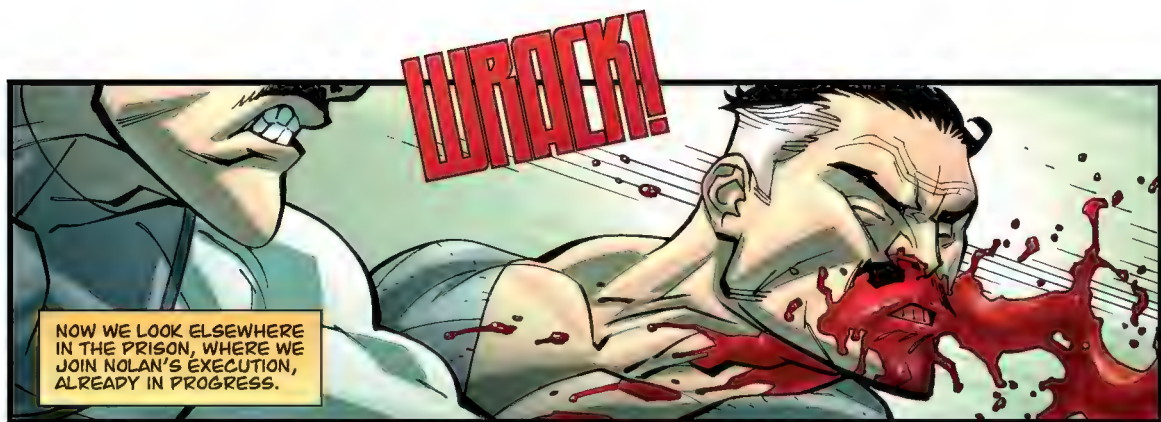
STEP THREE: ...?

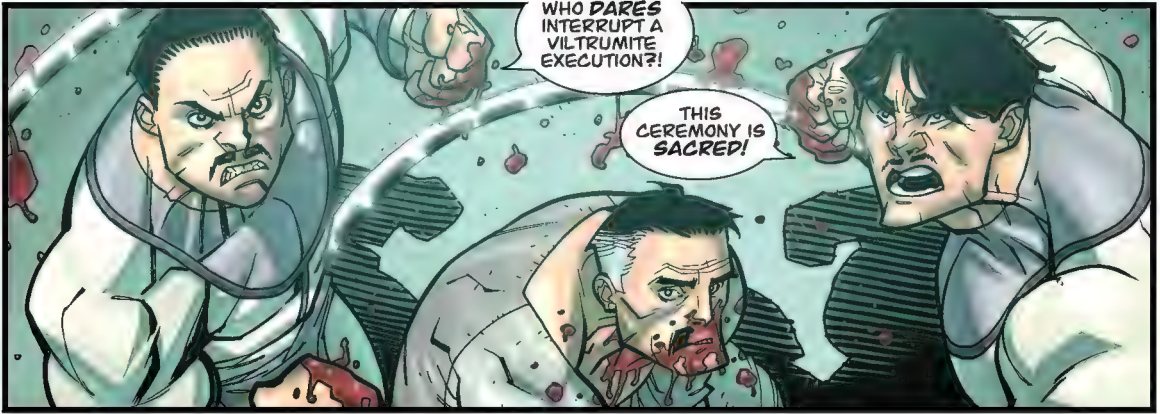
WHO IS
BRAVE ENOUGH
TO FREE
**BATTLE
BEAST?!**

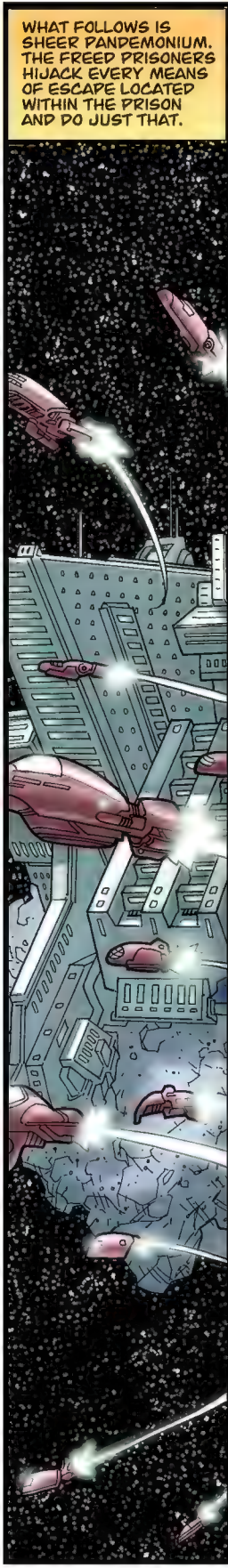
CHECK.











WHAT FOLLOWS IS SHEER PANDEMONIUM. THE FREED PRISONERS HIJACK EVERY MEANS OF ESCAPE LOCATED WITHIN THE PRISON AND DO JUST THAT.



ALLEN'S NEW FRIEND, BATTLE BEAST, FOCUSES ONLY ON ONE VILTRUMITE, HELPING ONLY BY KEEPING HIM OCCUPIED.

HE HAS FOUND HIS WORTHY ADVERSARY AND IS CONTENT TO SIMPLY ENJOY THE BATTLE.



THIS LEAVES NOLAN AND ALLEN ALONE TO FACE THE REMAINING VILTRUMITE EXECUTIONER-- AND HIS ARMY OF SUPER-POWERED PRISON GUARDS.

IT ISN'T A FIGHT EASILY WON.

HOLD UP--
I'VE GOT AN IDEA! WE CAN SURVIVE OUT IN SPACE--



BUT IT'S NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING ON THEIR PART.

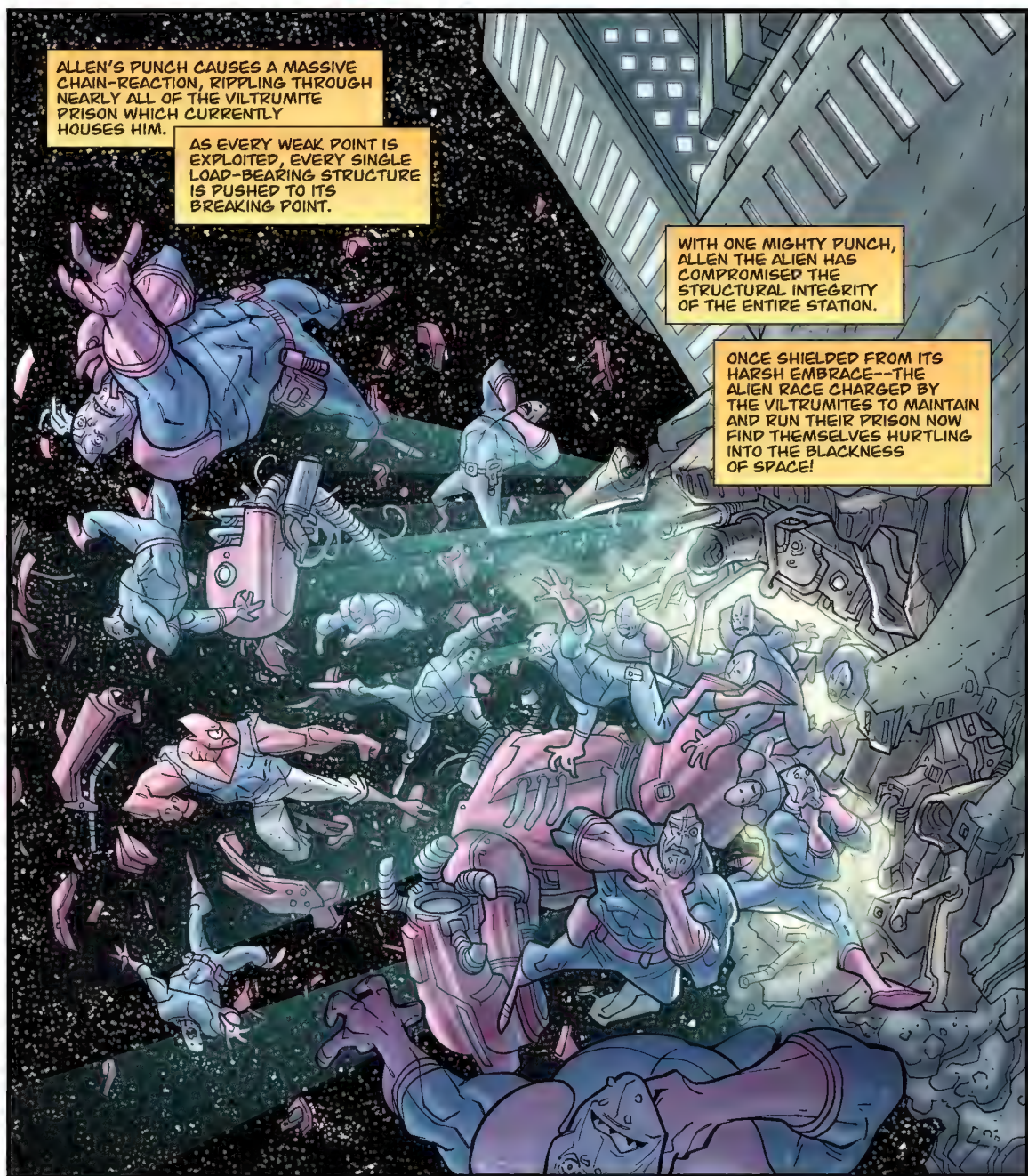


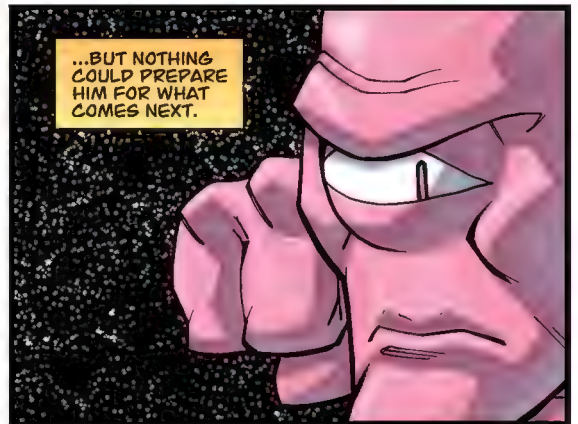
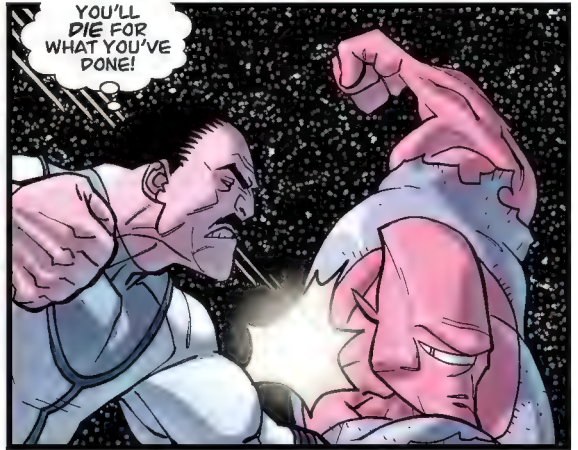
ALLEN'S PUNCH CAUSES A MASSIVE CHAIN-REACTION, RIPPLING THROUGH NEARLY ALL OF THE VILTRUMITE PRISON WHICH CURRENTLY HOUSES HIM.

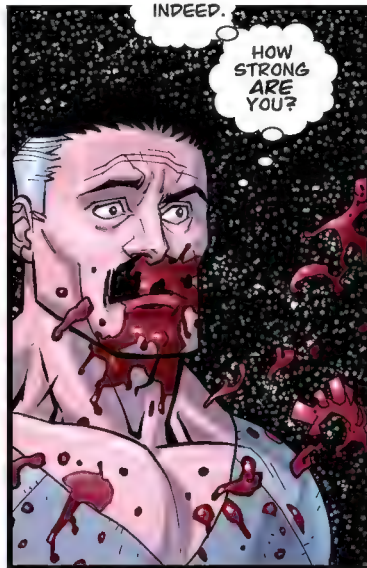
AS EVERY WEAK POINT IS EXPLOITED, EVERY SINGLE LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURE IS PUSHED TO ITS BREAKING POINT.

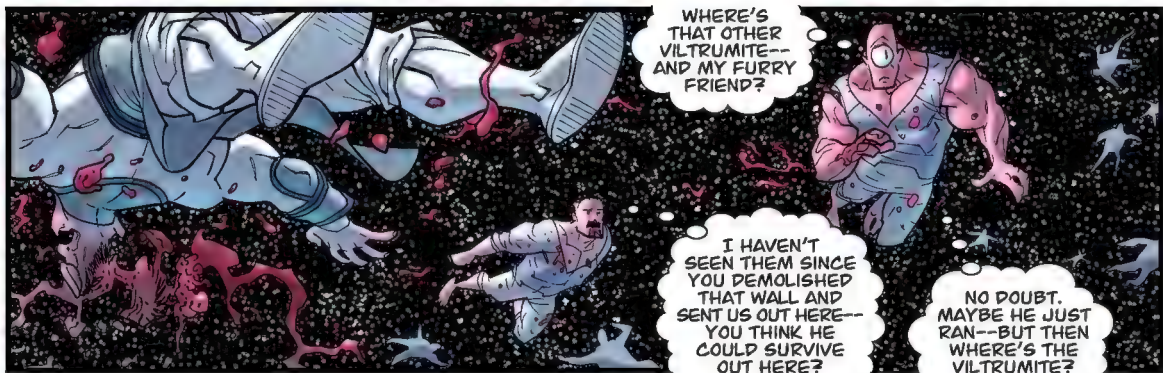
WITH ONE MIGHTY PUNCH, ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS COMPROMISED THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE ENTIRE STATION.

ONCE SHIELDED FROM ITS HARSH EMBRACE--THE ALIEN RACE CHARGED BY THE VILTRUMITES TO MAINTAIN AND RUN THEIR PRISON NOW FIND THEMSELVES HURLING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE!





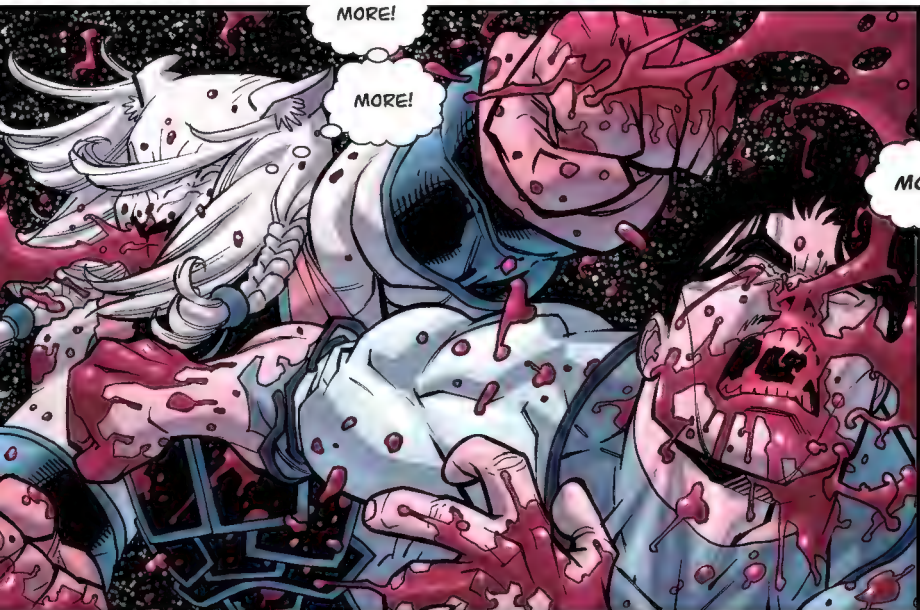




WHERE'S
THAT OTHER
VILTRUMITE--
AND MY FURRY
FRIEND?

I HAVEN'T
SEEN THEM SINCE
YOU DEMOLISHED
THAT WALL AND
SENT US OUT HERE--
YOU THINK HE
COULD SURVIVE
OUT HERE?

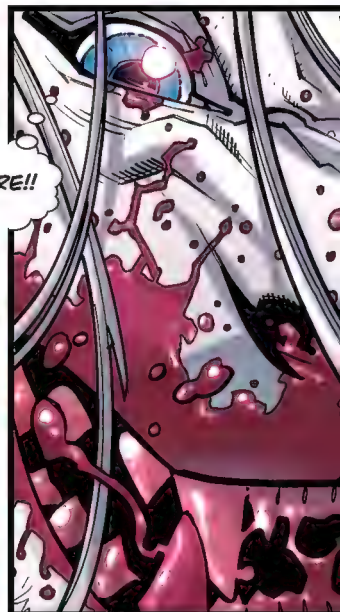
NO DOUBT.
MAYBE HE JUST
RAN--BUT THEN
WHERE'S THE
VILTRUMITE?



MORE!

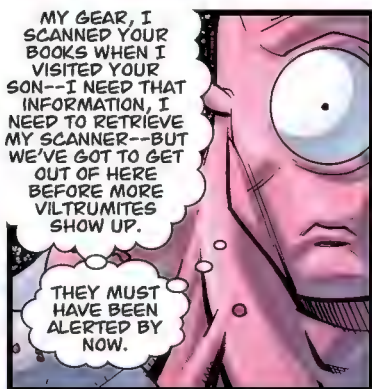
MORE!

MORE!!



CRAP!

WHAT
IS IT?



MY GEAR, I
SCANNED YOUR
BOOKS WHEN I
VISITED YOUR
SON--I NEED THAT
INFORMATION, I
NEED TO RETRIEVE
MY SCANNER--BUT
WE'VE GOT TO GET
OUT OF HERE
BEFORE MORE
VILTRUMITES
SHOW UP.

THEY MUST
HAVE BEEN
ALERTED BY
NOW.



YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO WORRY
ABOUT
THAT.

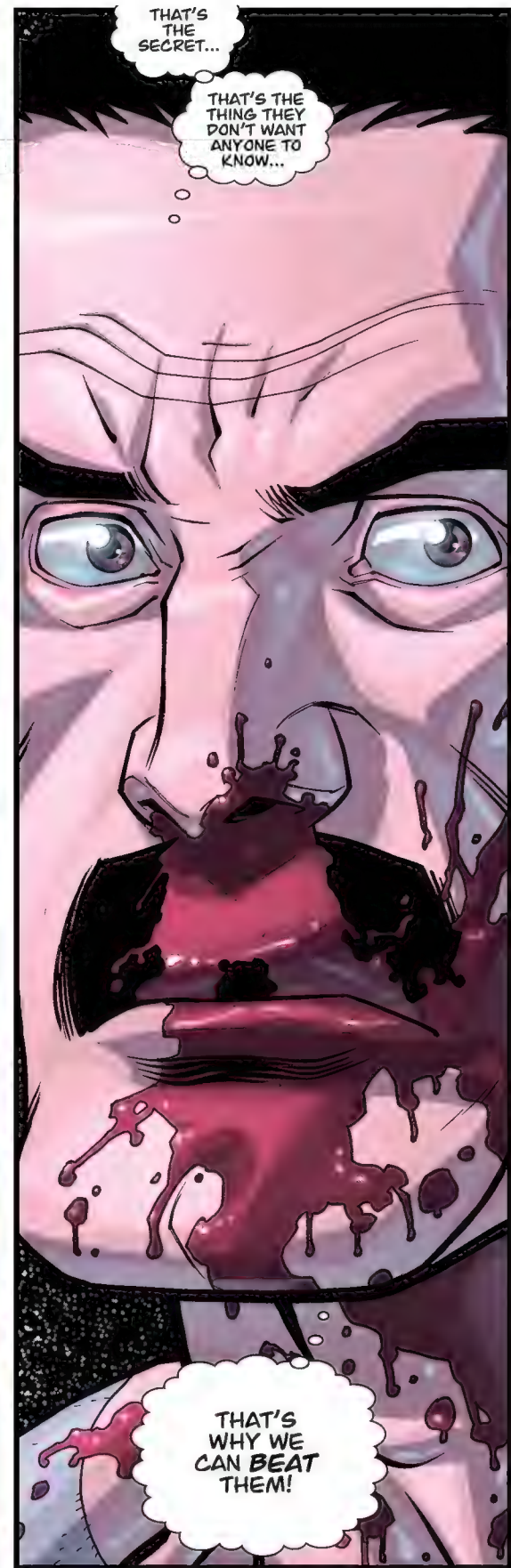
WHY?

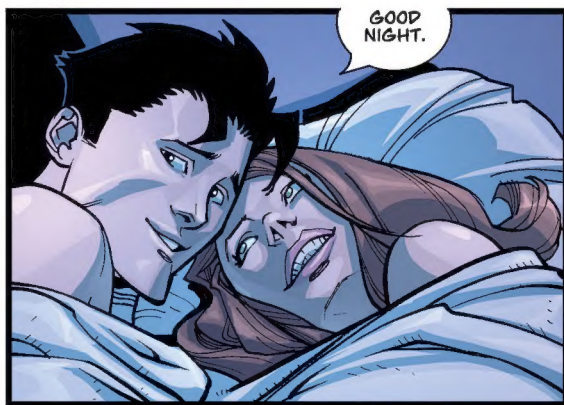
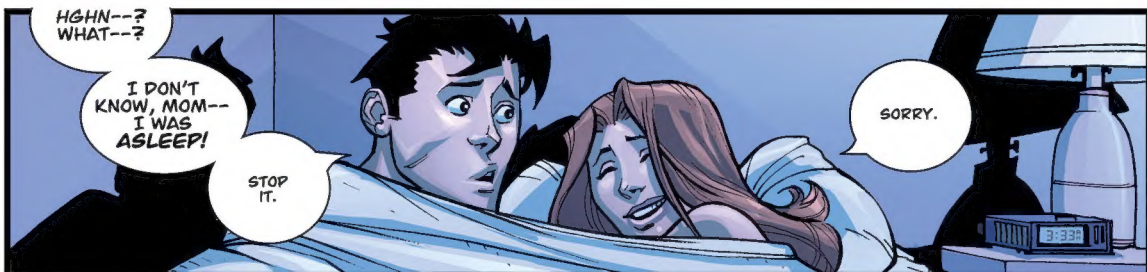


YOU HAVE
TIME TO GET
YOUR GEAR.
TAKE YOUR TIME,
WE'LL LOOK
FOR MORE
SUPPLIES.

TRUST
ME... NO
ONE IS
COMING.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW
THAT? HOW
CAN YOU
BE SO
SURE?





WRITE US @

INVINCIBLE

C/O FUNK-O-TRON

P.O. BOX 54386

LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

INVINCIBLE@FUNKOTRON.COM

PEN INVINCIBLE PALS

Hey, issue 55, and at this point... I believe issues 52-54, and y'know, this issue have all shipped at a pretty good clip, so that's good, right? This whole on-time in 2009 thing actually seems possible, right? That's a good thing. I really do feel we'll be able to get this ship-righted once and for all and ship this book monthly. I'm excited--I hope you're excited.

Now, this issue--what a load of fun I had with this one. I've wanted to do this issue since I finished issue 23. I had no idea it'd take until issue 55 to get all the pieces in place. I hope you guys dug it. Battle Beast returned--I hope you guys liked that. Also, Ryan and FCO just KILLED on this issue. Man it looks great.

Now... let's answer some mail.

Hey Mr. Kirkman!

I would like to first congratulate you on becoming one of the heads at Image!

I saw your video about creator owned titles and I agree with you. There aren't enough people taking chances to make comics great and original. I want to see more creator owned stuff from writers and artist and especially from you. I love INVINCIBLE and THE WALKING DEAD, they are two of my favorite comics of all time! INVINCIBLE is like my SPAWN comic. The fresh new original hero for my generation seeing as I was really little when SPAWN was made. And I think INVINCIBLE is the best thing from Image sense SPAWN!

The Astounding Wolf-Man, man! I'm already DOING more creator-owned work!

So two questions,

1) You talked about creator-owned stuff and we all know that that's where you started with comics like BATTLE POPE and BRIT. But what is your advice to newbies wanting to be creator-owned comic writers at Image?

Get your name out there first. Meaning, do SOMETHING first, if it's an Image book, if you're good enough to be picked up right off the bat, look at it like a stepping stone. Get your name out there and move on, do more and more stuff--each project sells your next project and could eventually snow-ball into you having a steady fan base. That's how I did it. It's very hard to get established in this business. If your first book isn't successful, don't cling to it forever... branch out, move on until you find what works.

2) Without giving it away what is the HAUNT comic that you are doing with Mr. McFarlane going to be about? It looks really cool!

It's about Daniel and Kurt Kilgore, brothers. Kurt is a secret agent, Daniel is a priest--together, they form HAUNT. You'll be hearing much more about this very soon. We're finally moving along at a good clip on the book.

Anyway you're the best in the industry.

And I would like to thank you for signing comics for me and taking a picture with me at the Heroes Con. '08 in Charlotte! (I was the nerdy white kid with the afro)

Thanks
Lane!

Yeah, that narrows it down... good meeting you!

Hey Kirkman,

I love your book.

Invincible #52 may have been the best issue so far. That final line...

...holy shit.

Miles, San Jose

Sweet--glad you dug it!

Kirk Man.

I have some neckbearding to do:

1) The Mauler twins. Whenever they make a clone, one of them is on the left, the other is on the right. Since the clone has been sitting in place for at least several minutes, there is no explanation why they don't know which is which. The premise of their little game doesn't make sense!

The concept is dependent on their arrogance to sell it. Also, they're clones, they're identical, one isn't really inferior to the other... they just think that way. Now, they BOTH remember sitting in a chair, they both remember the process, they both remember setting things up to be cloned. I would imagine there's a bit of disorientation that comes from the process--and then being too arrogant to even consider you may be the clone covers the rest. It makes sense--shut up.

2) Oliver. The man speaks the truth.

It's one of the many things that makes mainstream superhero comics suck so much. Like, at any time he felt like, Batman could have saved thousands and thousands of lives by performing a little snip-snap on the Joker's neck. By failing to do this very simple task, he's more culpable than the villains he completely fails to thwart. He's supposed to have some sanity and sense of morality, right?

But then people couldn't pay money to read an endless feel-good circle jerk, of serial killers and the heroes that let them kill serially..

That's your point of view. Oliver is logical, Mark is more... human. It's one thing to read a comic and think--yeah, it only makes sense to kill all the villains, I think it would be an entirely different matter if you had to actually do the killing. I mean, that's not an action that is performed with ease for most people.

Police officers in real life would have the same dilemma, "I can't convict this rapist/murderer... maybe I should kill them!" Yet, you don't hear about a lot of crazy killer vigilante cops outside of movies... do you? (I could be wrong.)

3) Why don't they give Bats his guns back? When I see the guy in media nowadays, all I can think of is "God, that guy really goes out of his way to make things difficult for himself."

Or maybe he knows it'd be too easy to kill that way. I think Batman does just fine without the guns.

4) Thank you for writing books where every page actually matters.

Bryan M.

I do try--I don't know that I always succeed, but I will admit, I do read a lot of comics and I do sometimes find myself thinking--

"okay, what does THIS page accomplish?!" I know it's hard enough as it is to draw a comic book page... so you might as well make it worthwhile as much as possible. I try to at least.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

I liked the dialog! This issue went down pretty easy, like food so good that you're finished eating it before ya even taste anything. BUT, hold up! This isn't a positive review. **(thank god!)** It seemed like this issue was rushed somehow. For once there wasn't ENOUGH dialogue! And in case you get to thinking that my tastes/standards are just too high, well, I just know this isn't that good; I like a lot of series better than this! I don't know if you ever noticed but--I've had letters printed elsewhere. Fantastic Four, Green Lantern, Superboy, Spider-Girl, you name it, over the years. Usually I tell them what they're doing wrong too--hey nobody's perfect--but I'd say I have more positive reviews elsewhere than here; I just wrote a "Thumbs Up" letter to Big Hero 6, for example. The last line of 'Vince #52 was "sometimes". If I understood what Invincible was agreeing too, that MAY have had more impact.

Really? I don't mean to be rude or anything, because honestly, Andrew--your letters are the highlight of most letters columns, but I must say, I think sometimes reading comprehension is the problem here. I think it was abundantly clear what Mark was talking about.

The big thing this time was Kid Omni-Man...can't believe that Mark has actually started calling him that with a straight face...killed those twin bad-guy villains(who might as well be called Crid and Crud, for all I know). Well--maybe it was an accident! Whatcha gonna do, send Oliver to Juvenile Hall or something? If he pays for this at all, I'd be surprised. Still--I loved the dialogue! That's good, right?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

PS: I agree the color and art are picking up nicely.

I agree as well--and they're the mauler twins. They were named... by Mark, on page one. Reading comprehension, Shaw... look into it!

Dear Kirkman,

Plot. It's the plot! It's the PLOT you gotta work on! Send 'Vince on a great long adventure somewhere, ya know? He could take a few of his friends with him, but you gotta introduce new folks, too! The cover to #52 does say "The All-NEW, All-Awesome" Invincible, right...? On a different note: do you think people actually pin-up pin-ups anymore? I put up posters, sure, but to rip apart an existing comic? Nah. Whenever Astounding Wolf-Man appears here, there's always like a million other guest-stars! Why can't JUST 'Vince and Wolfy fight someone together?

Hey, look at you predicting the future. Invincible 57 and The Astounding Wolf-Man 11 will be a two-part crossover--neat, huh?!

Finally I have a question for ya: do you think if ANY of your Image titles were at Marvel, in a much more competitive market, that they would have gone nearly as long as they have? I mean, when was the last time Marvel printed a black and white mag, for one thing?

On the flip-side, if The Irredeemable Ant-Man were an Image comic... it'd be going strong at around issue 25 by now. Marvel can make more money cycling through new series than giving series enough time to catch on and thrive. That's why you'll NEVER get another Thor, Iron Man, Spider-Man or X-Men from Marvel. There will never be a new character that will "always" have a series at Marvel. And that's a damn shame. Runaways is as close as they'll come, I think.

Invincible's costume is pretty dull now; maybe he should wear red--to hide all the blood stains?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Good idea.

Dear El Kirko,

I've been a honest and true reader of THE WALKING DEAD since I first picked up issue one so long ago now and now is one of the very few comics I still read although I have since I've been drawn to your other works in particular INVINCIBLE...now I apologize if anyone has already brought this up but I really would like to know in a grand act of self-reference in INVINCIBLE issue #33 when Invincible was confronted by Angstrom Levy, he was thrown through several alternate dimensions and as we know one was a world of zombies! Was this the same zombie world of THE WALKING DEAD? That would be so cool that during an issue of THE WALKING DEAD that up in a far corner of a panel up in the sky Invincible could be seen flying over and possibly even spotted by Carl who tells his Dad only to have it dismissed as Carl's overactive imagination....just an idea....

All the best from Blightly (p.s. any idea when you will grace our green and pleasant land?)

Jason Berry, Norfolk, UK

I had the zombies saying words in that scene specifically so they wouldn't appear to be from The Walking Dead. The zombies in TWD don't say "meat." I think having any connection between the two series would drastically undermine the seriousness of The Walking Dead... and kill the realism in that book.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

I started reading INVINCIBLE at about issue #46, and I have to say that I've been enjoying it (along with your other great titles, THE WALKING DEAD and THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN). But I've got to say, issue #52 was a real shock to me, and that's really saying something considering how desensitized I've become to violence.

I remember reading issue #51 and really enjoying the dynamic between Kid Omni-Man and Invincible. They've got a great relationship. I especially loved Oliver's insistence on being called Kid Omni-Man because of how much he cared for his father. It was actually quite touching.

Then, I picked up this issue to read another fun-filled adventure with Invincible and his trusty sidekick. Invincible rushes off to save the day while Kid Omni-Man is faced with two villains. I turn the page and...

"Holy s#!%, he just ripped that dude's guts out!" I turn the page to see what happens next and "Oh f@?#, he did it again!"

How do you do that? You make us so comfortable with characters and situations and then punch us across the face. And in the follow-up scene, you give a philosophical discussion on the issue of right and wrong. Oliver's attitude towards bad guys is often seen in edgier, more violent comic books, but it's rarely shown through the eyes of someone so young; it comes across as simultaneously mature and naive. I don't know if Cecil's comment on people not being used to seeing young people doing such things was meant to be a meta-textual comment on our own reactions, but it's how I felt.

Going back to read issue #51, it adds a certain sinister quality to Oliver's excitement at getting to be a superhero. I'm very interested to see where this incident leads in Invincible's life. Thanks for a thought provoking issue.

Chris Maher

Thanks, Chris. Writing is all peaks and valleys, silent followed by loud, calm followed by chaotic... it's a balance. I'm probably playing the gore card a little too much lately... yes, I get it Chris Sims, we'll be going easy on the gore for a bit.

Aaaaand, that's it for the issue. See you all back here very soon for issue 56!

-Robert Kirkman

CAN A HERO BE DRIVEN TO MURDER?



NEXT ISSUE

Ryan-fco plascencia